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MANAGEMENT COUNCIL NEWSLETTER

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A summary of significant events of
interest to USDA management

Issue #49

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CENTRAL ANSWERING SERVICE (CAS).....The purpose behind the establishment of CAS was to expedite the handling of routine general correspondence. After 5 months of operation, the volume of correspondence handled by the CAS continues to increase with the October workload approximately 50% higher than July. Nineteen agencies now refers letters to the CAS, and results to date indicate that 98% of the correspondence is now answered within one day. (Contact: Fred Krist, OP, ext. 73157)

MANAGEMENT COUNCIL CONFERENCE.....The Management Council Conference will be held at the Sheraton Patriot Inn in Williamsburg, Virginia, December 1-3. Some of the items for discussion, as suggested by council members will be:

- ...The role of the Office of Operations
 - ...Priorities for identifying and developing cost effective administrative services
 - ...New directions in Federal Procurement Policy
 - ...Property Management information systems
 - ...Space management in the D.C. complex
 - ...Limitations placed on USDA for acquiring GSA space
- (Contact: Dick Hadsell, 00, ext. 73152)

FY 1977 AFFIRMATIVE ACTION PLAN.....The USDA FY 77 Affirmative Action Plan emphasizes more management participation in recruiting, increased participation in Upward Mobility Programs, more use of the Cooperative Education Program, and more efficient processing of discrimination complaints. The plan is being sent to the Civil Service Commission for review and approval, along with the plans of seven of the eight major agencies. (Contact: Gloria Torres, OP, ext. 72973)

INSPIRED PERFORMANCE.....A frequent complaint about the civil service is that there is no incentive for outstanding ideas and performance--that mediocrity is encouraged. A look at the record, however, shows that in fiscal year 1976 more than 131,000 Federal employees were motivated to contribute ideas and actions that resulted in more than \$33 million in tangible benefits to the Government, an amount equivalent to the Federal income taxes of 182,000 average taxpayers. This record compares very favorably to the private sector, which achieves substantially less tangible benefits than the Government does per dollar awarded. There is a continuing willingness to contribute among Federal employees, and top managers should be aware of and support the Federal Incentive Awards Program as a means to encourage and recognize outstanding performance and ideas.

DEPARTMENT HITS 105.8 PERCENT OF CFC GOAL.....The CFC campaign has ended on schedule with a total of \$423,503.80 collected or pledged. A total of 9,318 employees representing 81.4% of the D.C. metropolitan area employees contributed an average of \$45.45.

This is the second consecutive year that the Department has gone over the 100% mark and is a tribute to all of the participants.

Secretary Knebel presented Certificates of Appreciation to chairpersons of the 21 agencies that exceeded 100% of their goal in a ceremony on November 1.

The percentages, by agency, are as follows:

AMS	114	FCS	125	OI	73
APHIS	85	FmHA	84	OMF	121
ARS	104	FNS	125	OO	90
ASCS	108	FS	89	OP	154
COMM	76	NAL	123	P&SA	101
CSRS	160	OA	100	RDS	123
EMSC	132	OADS	93	REA	108
ERS	112	OALJ	98	SCS	97
ES	81	OE0	104	SEC	81
FAS	139	OGC	100	SRS	144
FCIC	84	OGSi	110	GS	139

Special commendation for an outstanding performance is due Campaign Director Allan Johnson, ERS, Vice-Chairman Donald E. Wilkinson, Administrator, AMS, and the EMSC staff that provided the necessary support.
(Contact: Allan Johnson, ERS, ext. 78066)

PHYSICAL SECURITY - HANDICAPPED EMPLOYEE FACILITIES.....A contract has been awarded for installation of keycard operated doors in courts 2 and 5 of the South Building. Construction will begin on December 27 and take about 2 weeks. Handicapped employees will continue to be assisted by OI personnel when entering or leaving through Court 2 until the doors are installed.

Information on obtaining the keycards will be made available later. The keycards used for operation of the doors in the Administration Building will not operate those in the South Building. (Contact: Carl Tant, OI, ext. 76001)

NEW RENTAL CONTRACT FOR KCCC.....ADS and OO have negotiated a new contract with Federal Data Systems for rental of an IBM 360 Model 50 at the Kansas City Computer Center. The previous contract, which had expired, was also with Federal Data Systems. As a result, USDA's rental rate has been reduced some \$14,000 per month or a total of approximately \$182,000 over the remaining installed life of the system (November, 1977). (Contact: R. Long, ADS, ext. 74789)

THIRD ADP MANAGEMENT CONFERENCE.....The Department's Third ADP Management Conference will be held at the Dulles-Marriott on December 2 and 3, and will be chaired by ADS. This workshop will emphasize economic analysis skills from an ADP manager's perspective. (Contact: R. Long, ADS, ext. 74789)

GSA SPACE LEASE PRIORITIES.....The Department's priority list with agency recommendations was forwarded to GSA on November 2.

GSA has given the Department 108 space requests to be prioritized. USDA agencies, however, identified 85 additional requests for a total of 193. GSA will resume acquisition of leased space when the national priority listing is completed. The scheduled date is December 10.
(Contact: James Wood, 00, ext. 75225)

FORMS AND PUBLICATIONS MANAGEMENT TASK FORCE.....Agencies and staff offices are submitting data to the task force regarding forms and publications storage and distribution facilities, costs, workload, shipping and equipment. Task force members are visiting some field installations to make on-site evaluation of the facilities.

The task force report is scheduled for completion on December 22.
(Contact: Tom Foster, 00, ext. 78393)

GAO APPROVES MASTER CONSULTING AGREEMENT PROPOSAL.....In a decision signed on November 9, GAO has given approval to prequalifying firms to perform certain consulting projects. Up until now, this has been considered illegal. While some conditions on the use of this process are stipulated, savings to both government and industry are expected. 00 and agency representatives are developing procedures. This subject matter will be discussed further at the Williamsburg conference. (Contact: Dean Smith, 00, ext. 77527)

FEDERAL PROCUREMENT INSTITUTE (FPI).....A government-wide FPI is being established to assure uniform, comprehensive and quality training, graduate education, and develop a coordinated research effort in the procurement community. FPI Policy Board composed of Assistant Secretaries for Administration is now addressing the scope of FPI's role and means of financing. The scope will be initially limited to procurement with later expansion into grants areas. (Contact: Lacy Arnold, 00, ext. 77527)

COURT LEAVE.....Under a new law that became effective October 1, Federal employees who appear in court as witnesses will be granted official (paid) leave if the United States, the District of Columbia, or a state or local government is a party to the proceeding.

BUZZARD POINT.....No decision has been made on the possible move of FNS to Buzzard Point. The Assistant Secretary for Administration said that the decision will be made only after all data on impact of the move on FNS, its employees, and the Department have been assessed.
(Contact: Al Cauley, 00, ext. 72815)

RECONDITIONED FURNITURE.....The following article presents an excellent idea on how to save money; and the savings can be considerable. This 00 release is a real high payoff item.

DON'T BUY NEW FURNITURE . . . without reading this!



Refinished furniture display in Room 141-W.

Like most things we buy, new furniture is expensive. Its quality cannot match that of old grey desks and chairs. There is an ample supply of old furniture around the Department. Why not consider refinishing it? The result is an attractive suite of quality furniture at a fraction of the price of new furniture. And there is a wide choice of colors available.

Furniture rehabilitation is provided through Federal Supply Schedule contractors under Industrial Group 764, Class 7641. A minimum order, per color, of \$250 for painting and \$100 for reupholstering is required.

Here is how you can save \$999 in a typical two person office suite.

	Comparable New Item	Refinishing	Savings
Bookcase, top and base, 4 section	\$183	\$34	\$149
Cabinet, file, 5 drawer	128	23	105
Chair, rotary, side arms	102	38	64
Chair, side, with arms	54	18	36
Chair, typist	68	12	56
Credenza	243	30	213
Desk, secretarial, 60x34	185	55	130
Desk, flat top, 72x36	297	75	222
Rack, wearing apparel, 6 hat capacity	27	3	24
	\$1,287	\$288	\$999

There are two displays of refinished furniture in the Office of Operations. At your convenience, we invite you to inspect the display items in Rooms 141-W and 1526-S.